

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 18 without prejudice or disclaimer, add new claims 20 and 21, and amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A motor-driven power steering apparatus comprising:

a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;

a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;

a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;

a support portion in which the bearing is disposed; and

a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state, said curved leaf spring being fitted along an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and an inner surface of the support portion,

wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases, ~~and~~

wherein said curved leaf spring comprises end portions, said end portions being selected from the group consisting of overlapping end portions and end portions having a bent portion,
and

~~wherein said curved leaf spring contacts said outer peripheral surface of said bearing and substantially a whole~~ a substantially entire intermediate portion of said curved leaf spring except opposite said overlapping end portions or said end portions having a bent portion of said curved leaf spring contacts said inner surface of said support portion and said outer peripheral surface of said bearing.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the support portion includes a recess into which opposite ends of the curved leaf spring are inserted, and which is located distant from an axis of the follower gear with respect to an axis of the drive gear.
3. (Previously Presented) A motor-driven type power steering apparatus comprising:
 - a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;
 - a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;
 - a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;
 - a support portion in which the bearing is disposed; and
 - a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state,
 - wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases,
 - wherein the support portion includes a recess into which opposite ends of the curved leaf spring are inserted, and which is located distant from an axis of the follower gear with respect to an axis of the drive gear,
 - wherein the curved leaf spring includes an abutment portion formed adjacent to an end of the curved leaf spring and a bent portion projected outwardly from the abutment portion, the abutment portion abutting against an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and the bent portion being inserted into the recess of the support portion.
4. (Previously Presented) A motor-driven type power steering apparatus comprising:

a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;

a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;

a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;

a support portion in which the bearing is disposed; and

a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state, said curved leaf spring being fitted along an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and an inner surface of the support portion,

wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases,

wherein the support portion comprises a hole in which the bearing is disposed and which comprises a substantially oval shape such that a radius between a center of the drive gear and a first side region of the hole which is located distant from the axis of the follower gear with respect to the center is larger than a radius between the center and a second side region which is located close to the axis of the follower gear with respect to the center.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an end of the drive gear supported by the bearing is distant from the motor with respect to an other end of said drive gear.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:
a pressing member for pressing the drive gear in a direction away from the motor,

wherein the curved leaf spring includes a spring piece portion for pressing the bearing toward the motor.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said curved leaf spring comprises a strip of spring steel.

8. (Previously Presented) A motor-driven power steering apparatus comprising:

a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;

a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;

a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;

a support portion in which the bearing is disposed; and

a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state, said curved leaf spring being fitted along an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and an inner surface of the support portion,

wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases,

wherein said curved leaf spring comprises:

a first end having a notch formed thereon; and

a second end having a pair of notches formed thereon, and

wherein the notch on said first end is fitted between the pair of notches on said second end such that said first end and said second end intersect without increasing a width of said curved leaf spring.

9. (Previously Presented) A motor-driven power steering apparatus comprising:

a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;

a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;

a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;

a support portion in which the bearing is disposed; and

a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state, said curved leaf spring being fitted along an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and an inner surface of the support portion,

wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases, and

wherein said curved leaf spring comprises at least one spring protrusion formed on a side edge of a curved portion of the curved leaf spring, said at least one spring protrusion urges said bearing toward said motor.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said at least one spring protrusion project from the curved portion and are inclined inwardly relative to the peripheral surface of the curved portion.

14. (Previously Presented) A motor-driven power steering apparatus comprising:
- a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;
 - a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;
 - a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;
 - a support portion in which the bearing is disposed;
 - a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state, said curved leaf spring being fitted along an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and an inner surface of the support portion; and
 - a cushioning material coated on at least one surface of said curved leaf spring,
- wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases.

15. (Previously Presented) A motor-driven power steering apparatus comprising:
- a drive gear connected to an output shaft of a motor;
 - a follower gear meshed with the drive gear, which is connected to a steering unit;
 - a bearing for supporting one end of the drive gear;
 - a support portion in which the bearing is disposed; and
 - a curved leaf spring comprising a length larger than a peripheral length of the bearing and fitted between the bearing and the support portion in a resiliently deformed state, said curved leaf

spring being fitted along an outer peripheral surface of the bearing and an inner surface of the support portion; and

a cushioning material coated on an inner surface of said curved leaf spring and an outer surface of said curved leaf spring,

wherein the curved leaf spring urges the bearing such that a distance between an axis of the follower gear and an axis of the drive gear decreases.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said curved leaf spring comprises abutment portions for abutting against the outer peripheral surface of the bearing.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said abutment portions comprise bent portions projecting outwardly from said abutment portions.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a resilient force of end portions of said curved leaf spring urges said bearing.

20. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said end portions comprise said overlapping end portions, and

wherein said overlapping end portions of said curved leaf spring are received in a recess formed in said support portion.

21. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said end portions comprise said end portions having said bent portion, and

wherein said bent portions are received in a recess formed in said support member.